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TEXAS SENATE PASSES HISTORIC SCHOOL CHOICE LEGISLATION ***-Senator Taylor's Senate Bill 3 will expand educational opportunities-***

AUSTIN, TEXAS (March 31, 2017) . . . The Texas Senate passed SB 3 by Senator Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood). The historic legislation will dramatically expand school choice and educational opportunities for all Texas schoolchildren. The legislation passed the Texas Senate by a vote of 18-13.

Senator Taylor said, "Today was an historic day for Texas and we have taken a huge step forward in improving educational opportunities for Texas schoolchildren. I'm eager to work with our colleagues in the Texas House of Representatives in a collaborative effort to pass meaningful education reform." Taylor thanked his Senate colleagues and added, "I'm grateful to my fellow Senators for their invaluable input, encouragement and support."

Senate Bill 3 establishes two opportunities to maximize education choices for parents and students – an Education Savings Account (ESA) program and a Tax Credit Scholarship program. The ESA program will be administered by the State Comptroller and will provide parents with funds for the education needs of their child, including private school tuition at an accredited private school, private tutoring, online learning or other qualified options (i.e. – curriculum, instructional materials and courses).

The Education Savings Accounts and Tax Credit Scholarships within Senate Bill 3 do not receive any money from the Foundation School Program (FSP) – the State's main source of funding for public education. In fact, the state of Texas realizes an ultimate savings since the award amounts for participants of ESAs and TSCs are less than what a student would be entitled to if they were in the public school system.

Senate Bill 3 also contains a provision that requires the state send 50% of the realized savings to the school district a student leaves, ultimately providing more money to traditional school districts on a per student basis.

Funding for eligible students is determined according to family income levels. Under current state law, when a child leaves a school, the district that student leaves loses all state funding for that student. Under Senate Bill 3, a district will still receive partial funding for a student they're not educating.

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The Tax Credit Scholarship program will be administered by an educational assistance organization selected by the State Comptroller, a non-profit, 501(c)(3). Participating businesses may receive a tax credit up to 50% of their annual insurance tax liability for contributions made to the education assistance organizations for education tuition scholarships.

Eligible students may apply for a scholarship for up to 75% of the statewide average school districts receive for student average daily attendance; or a scholarship up to \$500 for academic support programs at a public school.

According to education experts, 24 studies have been conducted on the national level that have evaluated the effects of school choice competition on public school test scores. The results indicate that 23 out of the 24 studies showed positive effects. In addition, school choice advocates estimate that a statewide ESA program in Texas would lead to 11,809 additional high school graduates within 5 years.

Senator Taylor added, "Texas is on the brink of joining the 30 other states in America with some type of school choice program. I'm confident our actions today will lead to enhanced opportunities and improved academic performance for Texas schoolchildren who need our help the most."

Senator Larry Taylor is a lifelong Texan and Baylor University graduate raised in Friendswood. He and his wife Kerri have three adult children and two grandchildren. Senator Taylor owns Truman Taylor Insurance Agency in Friendswood, an independent agency started by his father 55 years ago. Prior to his election to the Texas Senate in 2012, he served five terms in the Texas House of Representatives. Senator Taylor represents Senate District 11, comprised of portions of Brazoria, Galveston, and Harris Counties.

(NOTE: Please see attached background document for a detailed explanation of SB 3)

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